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Informal Working Group 6

Preliminary Views on WRC-03

WRC-2003 Agenda Item 1.3 *to consider identification of globally/regionally harmonized bands, to the extent practicable, for the implementation of future advanced solutions to meet the needs of public protection agencies, including those dealing with emergency situations and disaster relief, and to make regulatory provisions, as necessary, taking into account Resolution 645/[GT PLEN-2/5] (WRC-2000)*

Issue: Pursuant to Resolution 1156 of WRC-2000, modify Article S5 of the Radio Regulations at WRC-2003 to identify frequency bands that could be used on a global/regional basis by administrations intending to implement future solutions for public protection agencies and organizations, including those dealing with emergency situations and disaster relief.

Background: WRC-2000 took notice of the growing telecommunication needs of public protection and disaster relief agencies, the requirements imposed by future advanced solutions employing high data rates, video and multimedia technologies, and the need for interoperability among service providers dealing with emergency situations and disaster relief. In recognition of the importance of such growing needs to the maintenance of law and order and the protection of life and property, WRC-2000 resolved to study, as a matter of urgency, identification of frequency bands that could be used on a global/regional basis by administrations intending to implement future solutions for public protection agencies, including those dealing with emergency situations and disaster relief, to consider the identification of globally/regionally harmonized bands at WRC-2003, and to make regulatory provisions, as necessary.

These studies are to be conducted in WP 8A. A questionnaire has been circulated to all ITU members requesting information on the type of PPDR services presently deployed and planned, distinguishing among narrowband, wideband, and broadband technologies, and spectrum allocations for PPDR services present and future. Further work of WP 8A will include analyzing the questionnaire responses, discussing a methodology for determining how much spectrum is needed for PPDR, and developing draft text for the WRC 2003 CPM Report.

This initiative is designed to enhance the ability of public protection and disaster relief organizations to work together through improved communications interoperability and to enable the equipment economies of scale necessary to lower the costs of specialized telecommunications systems to publicly funded entities that protect life and property. A harmonized spectrum plan may also result in the availability of spectrum for broadband applications for high data rate and multimedia systems designed to meet the specific future needs of public protection and disaster relief agencies. Harmonizing spectrum and regulatory requirements should improve the potential for communications interoperability when a country receives assistance from its global village partners during times of disaster. When disaster relief agencies respond around the world they generally bring their own communications equipment. In such cases, it is necessary to establish an inter-agency communications function to effectively coordinate efforts and maximize the number of lives saved. Harmonized spectrum provides the potential for relief organizations around the world to communicate and interact more quickly and efficiently, thereby speeding disaster relief efforts.

Preliminary Views: At WRC-03, the United States should support the identification of globally/regionally harmonized frequency bands for the provision of public protection and disaster relief services. (17 April 2001)